

OLIVE OIL CONSUMPTION, AS AN INDICATOR OF MEDITERRANEAN DIET ADHERENCE, IS NOT EDUCATION LEVEL-RELATED IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Introduction

The consumption of olive oil is one of the hallmarks of the Mediterranean diet (MD). Being rich in polyphenols, olive oil is considered to underlie, at least in part, the much appreciated positive influence of MD on health preservation and longevity. The work presented here is a part of a larger project, MeDiWeB (Mediterranean Diet and Wellbeing), conducted using an on-line questionnaire in several Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean countries.

The frequent consumption of olive oil is a part of the traditional diet in the Mediterranean region. However, in sub-Mediterranean countries, many other factors can influence the inclusion of olive oil in the daily diet, including the level of education, the level of information, social and economic factors, etc. The aim of the presented work is to study the association between the education level of the participants and the amount of the consumed olive oil per day.

Methods

Total of 400 responses were collected using a large MeDiWeB on-line questionnaire, that was selected for the required responses: the level of education and the total quantity, i.e. number of spoons (15 mL) of olive oil used per day. The hypothesis that there is no relation between the level of education and the intake of olive oil, was tested using Chi square test, with Yates's correction.

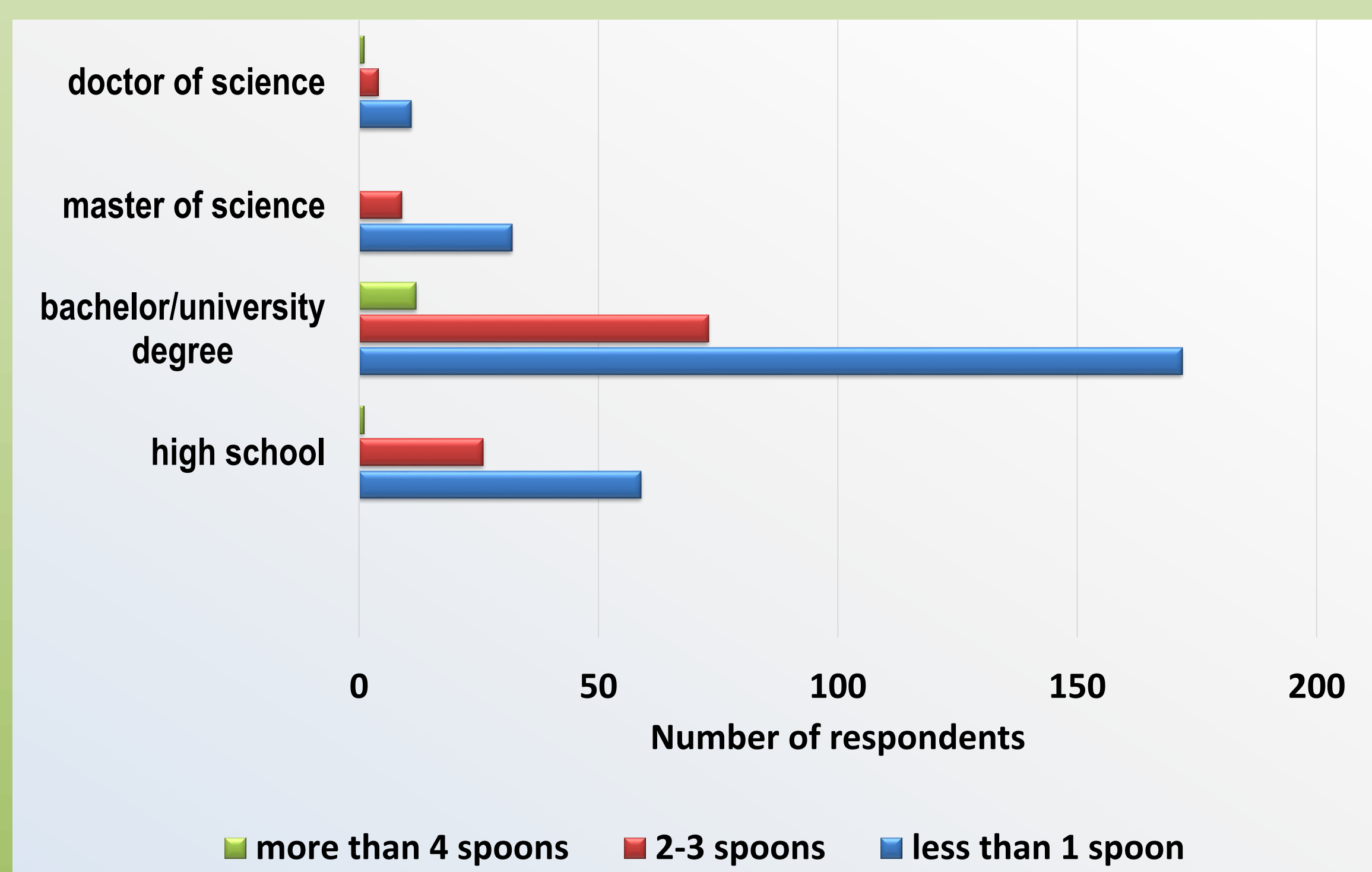


Fig.1. Distribution of responses for the level of education and olive oil intake.

Results

The low consumption of olive oil is evident: 68.60% of the respondents with high school, 66.93% with bachelor/university degree, 78.05% of the respondents with master and 68.57% with PhD degree use less than one spoon of olive oil per day, as shown on Fig. 1. These results were expected because in our country, the traditional diet is more oriented to using sunflower oil for cooking and seasoning food.

The statistical analysis of the responses using Chi-square test with p-value > 0.05, revealed that there is lack of association between the level of participants' education and olive oil intake.

References

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Conclusion

Further analyses of the data collected with the MeDiWeB questionnaire will give a deeper understanding of the reasons for the low intake of olive oil in North Macedonia. Regardless of the lack of association of the participants' education and olive oil intake, we believe that advocating the health benefits of olive oil and Mediterranean diet in general, can result in increase of the consumption of olive oil in the general population, and therefore utilizing its' benefits to the health.